

CD 2003--32/33

Wednesday, March 19, 2003
8 pm. Walter Hall

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
Presents

Contemporary Music Ensemble

Gary Kulesha, director
in
JOHN WEINZWEIG: A CELEBRATION

PROGRAMME

Interlude in an Artist's Life for String Orchestra
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE
Gary Kulesha, conductor

Sonata for Piano
Brian Harman, piano

Intermissions for Flute and Oboe
Emma Tessier, flute; Lief Mosbaugh, oboe

Private Collection
Kristin Mueller, soprano; Gary Kulesha, piano

- INTERMISSION -

Improvisation on an Indian Tune for Organ
Roger Bergs, organ

String Quartet No. 2
THE DOWNTOWN QUARTET
Christian Robinson & Jennifer Burford, violins
Alex McLeod, viola; Alex Lee, cello

Divertimento No. 4 for Clarinet and String Orchestra
Peter Stoll, clarinet
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE
Gary Kulesha, conductor

Biographies

Gary Kulesha is one of Canada's most active and most visible musicians. Although principally a composer, he is active as both a pianist and a conductor, and as a teacher. Mr. Kulesha's music has been commissioned, performed, and recorded by musicians and ensembles all over the world. His *Angels for Marimba and Tape* has become a standard repertoire item for percussionists, and receives over a hundred performances per year. His works for Danish recorder virtuoso Michala Petri are toured by her throughout the world each year, and have been recorded on RCA Red Seal. Over 15,000 copies have been sold in Europe alone. *Celebration Overture* is one of the most performed orchestral pieces written in Canada, and has received performances by more than 10 orchestras in the last three years. Mr. Kulesha's first opera, *Red Emma*, was included in Opera America's book of "Operas which should be performed more often", beside works by Copland, Bernstein, and Weill.

In 1988, he was appointed Composer In Residence with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until 1992. In 1993, he was appointed Composer In Residence with the Canadian Opera Company, a position he held until the end of 1995. On Sept. 1 of 1995, he was appointed Composer-Advisor to The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, where his duties include composing, conducting, and advising on repertoire. In February of 1998, the TSO premiered his *Symphony* for two conductors and orchestra. In winter of 1999, the TSO took his work *The Gates of Time* on their American tour. In February of 2000, the TSO premiered *The True Colour of the Sky* in Toronto, prior to taking it on their European tour. As well, the TSO presented *Symphony* again, in November of 2000, as part of the Massey Hall New Music Festival. The *Symphony* was awarded a prize at the Winnipeg Symphony New Music Festival in 2001 as Best Canadian Orchestra Composition of the 1990s. The *Symphony* opened the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's 2001-2002

season, on a programme with Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

In July of 1998, Mr. Kulesha was, with Krzysztof Penderecki, one of the two Composers-in-Residence at the Banff Centre's summer session to which he returned in 2002.

Gary Kulesha teaches theory and composition at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music where he is the director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble.

John Weinzwieg was born in Toronto on March 11, 1913. The composer recalls his checkered early career: "Between the ages of 14 and 19, I studied the piano, mandolin, tuba, double bass and tenor saxophone, as well as harmony. I played and conducted school orchestras, dance bands, weddings, lodge meetings and on electioneering trucks for a range of fees between two dollars and a promise. I played Pirates of Penzance, Poet and Peasant, Blue Danube, St. Louis Blues, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, Chopin waltzes and Tiger Rag. At age 19 I got serious and decided to become a composer."

He continued his music studies at the University of Toronto (1934-37), where he also founded and conducted the University of Toronto Symphony during his student years. Upon the invitation of Howard Hanson he enrolled at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., in the Masters program, where he received his first formal guidance in composition under Bernard Rogers. While at Eastman he discovered for himself the music of Alban Berg and the 12-tone method which was to be a lasting influence on his creative thinking. John Weinzwieg is regarded as the first composer in Canada to have made use of this technique.

He returned to Toronto in the fall of 1938 to face the difficulties of pursuing a composing career and hostile reactions to his music from both musicians and members of the public. In 1941 he was invited by the CBC to compose the first original background music for dramatic radio

presentations, and the following year he composed his first film score for the National Film Board of Canada. These proved to be an invaluable experience in applying his contemporary ideas to a media that tended towards a conservative sonic background.

At the invitation of Sir Ernest MacMillan, he joined the Royal Conservatory in 1939 as teacher of composition and orchestration, and accepted a professorship at the University of Toronto in 1952, where he developed the composition department through to graduate studies. In 1978 he retired from the University as Professor Emeritus. Among his many talented students were: Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, Murray Adaskin and Phil Nimmons; R. Murray Schafer, Norma Beecroft, Gustav Ciamaga and John Beckwith; Brian Cherney, Paul Pedersen, Robert Aitken and John Rea; David Jaeger, Kristi Allik, Peter Paul Koprowski and Tomas Dusatko.

In 1951 Weinzwieg and several of his former students, concerned by the lack of opportunities for music publication or performance of extended works, formalized their ideals and founded the Canadian League of Composers. As the League's first President, he embarked on a new career dedicated to advocating on behalf of musical creators. For many years he served on the Board of Directors of the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada (CAPAC), including as its President from 1973-75, and later on that of the amalgamated performing rights agency SOCAN. As well, he was co-planner of the Canadian Music Centre in 1959, and Chairman of the International Conference of Composers in 1960.

John Weinzwieg has been a recipient of the Canada Council Senior Arts Award and Honourary Doctorates from the University of Ottawa and the University of Toronto. For his service to music he was named to the Order of Canada and received the Canadian Music Council Medal, the Order of Ontario and the Golden Jubilee Medal.

John Weinzwieg's music is described in the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada as characterized by "clarity of texture, economy of material, rhythmic energy, and tight motivic organization." A notable feature of Weinzwieg's output is the series of *Divertimenti*. After the success of his *Divertimento No. 1 for flute and strings* at the 1948 London Olympiad (Silver Medal), he extended this idea of a concerto-like, animated and rhythmic spirit featuring solo winds such as oboe, bassoon, saxophone, tuba, and the latest for English horn. The *Harp Concerto* (1967) and *15 Pieces for Harp* (1983) are major contributions to contemporary harp literature, and secured the composer Honourary Membership in the American Harp Society (1984). Having written for a wide variety of media through orchestra to unaccompanied instrument, film scores to choral settings, in later years Weinzwieg has become particularly interested in the exploitation of the sounds of common speech and responding to the events of everyday life. *Dialogue* (1971), and the more recent *Prime Time* (1991), are forays into the realm of music theatre.

Richard Henninger wrote of John Weinzwieg in 1973 on the occasion of his 60th birthday: "Now, at a time when mainstream twentieth century techniques are a fact of life in Canadian composition, we can look back and realize that, more than any other musician, John Weinzwieg was responsible for initiating their usage. With his own music, in the early forties, Weinzwieg broke the ground for the rest of us by putting sounds inspired by Berg and Stravinsky before radio and concert audiences at a time when such sounds were sure to meet resistance. By introducing contemporary techniques to a few sympathetic colleagues and students, he generated a small group of like-minded composers which became the foundation of the variety and quality found in Canadian music today."

Centrediscs compact discs featuring the music of John Weinzwieg are *Crossroads*, *Private Collection* and *Weinzwieg in Concert*.

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